

STRONG PAPER BY MR. COPENHAVER

Smyth County Superintendent Discusses School Curriculum in Able Manner.

QUESTION OF MODIFICATION

Matter is One of Great Interest to School People of Virginia.

One of the strongest papers read before the Educational Conference here last year was by Superintendent B. E. Copenhaver, of Smyth county, on "In What Respects Should the School Curriculum be Modified to Meet Twentieth Century Demands?" It followed:

Every child begins life like an explorer entering an unknown country. His teachers are no more than guides, and his school curriculum is by no means a perfect map, but only a chart, giving at best a bare outline of the unexplored regions. The selection of a well-qualified guide is the matter of supreme importance to the young traveler, but in order that progress may be accomplished without waste of time, a good chart is also essential.

Now what is the ideal chart or curriculum? Certainly, as Dr. Lange says, not "a chaos of isolated subjects added from time to time because of some popular or professional demand," but the esoteric interest of the schoolmaster. If our school curriculum in a few short years, is to transform indifference and ignorance into interest and knowledge, it must be arranged according to a natural order of sequence of subjects, wisely co-ordinated in unity which will secure certain definite aims.

Just a Beginning.

Then what are the certain definite aims for the accomplishment of which the school curriculum must be arranged?

"The problem of the school," says one of our greatest educational leaders, "is not to be sought in making the pupil ready for life, so that he shall have nothing further to learn, much rather can and will education prepare the student to find his way in the help of what he has learned, in the domains of knowledge, feeling and volition."

The studies of the curriculum are not an end, but a means to an end, and that end is the child; the child from the mansion and the cabin, the child from the cultured home, and the child from the streets, the factory and the mine. If the child has learned self-mastery, self-activity and the highest form of self-expression, by the time he leaves the public school, the end has been attained for which the curriculum was designed. "Not what he has studied, but how he has studied it," says Herbert, "is the all-important thing."

Let us hear this in mind in considering what would seem to be a second aspect of the question, viz:

Should the twentieth century demands affect the school curriculum so that it should be modified to attain any other end than the one just defined?

The German writer expresses better than any English equivalent the spirit of the age.

What is the spirit of the twentieth century? What are its demands?

Idea Summed Up.

If we gather our ideas of the spirit of the century from current words and phrases applied to it by our own speakers and writers, we find that it is "materialistic," a vague polysyllable, by the way which no one attempts to define, and which might be applied to the age of Solon or Nero, or almost any other man.

"Stronous" (an adjective which has suffered recently from excessive popularity), "commercial" (a term which means this thing or that, and is applied with equal force to the ancient Phoenicians and the modern commercial traveler).

In addition to this, we know that

our century is pre-eminently an age of specialization. President Bryan, of Franklin College, has forcibly outlined the development of the tendency and its results.

Not Unusual Now.

"A century ago the mother was cook, washwoman, housekeeper, doctor nurse, teacher and Governor's cabinet. The father was farmer, carpenter, blacksmith, shoemaker, school superintendent and policeman. Only a few years ago many of the leading colleges had a professor of history and literature, and a professor of mathematics, astronomy and physics. Scarcely today do you find such a combination of subjects under one man. From the simple undifferentiated life of the pioneers, we have passed to the complex differentiated life of today along all lines. As a rule the minister is no longer a spiritual farmer, with a good common school education; the teacher is no longer without scholastic and professional training. A half-thousand men are required to make a piano, each doing his own particular work, and in the same way a score of men are required to make a ship. The outcome of all this is that the world's work was never so well done as it is now, and the world's service to the individual was never so great as it is at the present day.

What Bryan Says.

Now, how shall the school curriculum be modified to meet the demands of this commercial age, this strenuous age, this age of specialization? Let me quote again from President Bryan: "Our social life is fearfully diversified; it demands skill and expertness; but this skill must be grafted upon a broad basis of general culture, if society is ever to free itself from the displaced thousands who, because of early and continuous narrow training, do just one thing or nothing. Because our life is narrow and intense is the greatest social reason why no one should be satisfied with narrow, specialized preparation. Not only does the theoretical pedagogy demand a sound, extensive general education for the masses, but sociology as well is crying aloud for the extension of the opportunities for basal training to every child in the land, of however humble birth, and in however circumscribed field he seems destined to pass his life." "We must never yield," says W. T. Harris, "to the economic spirit that proposes to curtail the humanizing studies for the sake of adding special training for industries. Rather must we do what we can to extend the period of study in pure science and in the humanities, knowing that all which goes to develop the ability of the youth to see possibilities and to make a more productive laborer in the fields of industry."

Laid Broad Basis.

Our most progressive educators agree that education must be specialized, but not until a broad basis for general culture has been laid in our public and our high schools.

For these reasons the demand for a course of study adapted to various economic and professional ideals should be resisted; but there are other demands which call for a rearrangement of the curriculum according to the demands of present-day psychology.

These other demands must be met. The studies best suited to the development of the intellectual activities of the child must be chosen and properly correlated; then differentiated into special branches of knowledge.

Strong Suggestions.

The limits of this paper forbid anything more than a brief mention of the modifications which will result from the carrying out of these principles. Natural study should precede geography, furnishing, as it does, the best starting-point for stimulating the child's powers of observation, arousing the spirit of inquiry, extending his range of perceptions, and thus preparing the way for subsequent and critical abstract study. Language, literature and history, the humanities which have been, and should continue to be, the staples of the curriculum, should be co-ordinated so that rigorous thinking should lead to clear thinking, and all should contribute to that first result of an education, the power of untrammeled self-expression.

Among the most important changes to be made in our curriculum are some which have been made in the public schools of the New England States and many of the city schools of Virginia, but which, so far as I know, have not been made in any of our rural schools. Physical culture, physical education and manual training in some form should be made, not extras, but essentials of our curriculum.

Demand Conceded.

The demand for these additions is universally conceded. It would be unnecessary for me, in the presence of this body of educators, to attempt to emphasize the value of a systematic course of physical training, the attention, developing the will-power, and making the body the willing servant of the mind. Neither shall I try to establish the value of vocal music, both as an aid to discipline, and as an important help in the development of the aesthetic side of the child's nature. Nor is it necessary for me to

summing up the ideas expressed by these various and vaguely used words, we arrive at the conclusion voiced by Mr. Shepard at a recent educational meeting—that the characteristics of our American civilization in the twentieth century are to be crowded life and great wealth, which carry with them great dangers and the possibility of public and private rottenness."

In addition to this, we know that

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

A special meeting of the executive committee of the Virginia State Teachers' Association will be held in State Superintendent Eggleston's office in Richmond September 2d and 3d. The meeting will be held in connection with the representatives of the other educational forces of Virginia, and will, it is believed, result in great things for the cause of education in the State.

One of the important duties of this meeting will be to outline a tentative program for our next annual conference. There is every reason to believe that our next conference will be as big as the Richmond conference of last November.

Another important matter to be considered at this meeting is plans for a "fall campaign" to create public sentiment for certain school legislation during the approaching General Assembly. Here lies the burden of the work of the Virginia State Teachers' Association. School trustees cannot have better schools, better teachers and higher salaries unless the people will give them more money. They are doing

great things with the money they have. Neither can we expect our representatives to enact certain school legislation without public sentiment demanding it. It should be clear to all that school legislation must come through public sentiment. Ours is to create this sentiment.

As Superintendent Eggleston puts it, the State Teachers' Association should take hold of a few definite, practical school problems, and have them settled by legislative enactments. The State Teachers' Association should outline plans at this meeting, aiming in their scope to hold teachers' meetings in every county of the State, to discuss the few practical problems demanding immediate attention. At these meetings resolutions could be passed, to be placed into the hands of every representative of the State. The should be a meeting to put people to work. Great things are expected of us as an association just at this time, and we must not prove wanting.

E. B. FITZPATRICK, President State Teachers' Association.

enumerate here the invaluable effects of some form of manual training, developing, as it does, the power of observation and originality, affording a means of self-activity and self-expression, and establishing, as the scientists tell us, "a habit of connection between the sensor and the motor brains." But I wish to suggest that these subjects should be made, not extras, but required course of study, and that the most effective means of carrying this part of the curriculum into effect is through the summer normal. The ability to stand a not rigid examination on these subjects should form a part of the test imposed on our teachers.

As to the Bible.

As touching upon the moral phase of our curriculum, it would seem that the part of manual training which is of prime and greatest importance is last to receive pronounced treatment by the educators of the past. When we look far the Bible should enter our system is a question hitherto but little agitated. But that the twentieth century will project prominently this feature of education, the educators of this Christian age are not to be doubted. The time in life when basal truths must be acquired? Then, if so, it would seem that we must assuredly incorporate in our curriculum a systematic course of setting forth the teachings of the Holy Bible. Let the training of the hand and head be savored with an early Christian training of the heart.

Two Classes.

In summing up, we might roughly divide twentieth century demands upon the school curriculum into two classes—demands to be resisted, and demands to be met. In the first division may be reckoned all those demands arising from the commercial spirit of the century, demands for early industrial education, demands for specialization, demands for so-called practical training. This spirit of the age, the "world spirit," will shape the ideals of youth, in many cases more powerfully than the influence of the school room. Therefore, the curriculum should not run in the same groove with these tendencies, but should provide a liberal culture, a disciplined intelligence trained wisely to solve the social and industrial problems of the future.

Second Division.

In the second division, we class the demands which modern psychology has made apparent by its scientific study of the child. These demands call for no radical changes; the subject-matter remaining very much the same. What they do require is rearrangement, a closer co-ordination of subjects, a more scientific method of instruction, a greater regard for the child's nature, the ethical need of the future citizens of the State.

From each of us who has a part, however small, in our educational system, the twentieth century demands an intelligent interest in all the forces that should control the pedagogy of our age, an active participation in the solution of the problems pressing upon us from all sides, and a delight in the service, commensurate, not with the apparent results, but with the greatness of the cause.

Meeting at City Mission.

The City Mission visitors will meet at 10:30 A. M. Monday, September 2d, at the Women's Christian Association.

Cheap Scandal.

Stella—Did she go to a summer hotel during August?

John—No, just stayed at home and listened on a party wire.—Puck.

NOMINATE CANDIDATES FOR HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]
ABINGDON, Va., August 31.—The Democratic convention, composed of delegates from the city of Bristol, Va., and Washington county, met here this afternoon and nominated Alexander Stuart, of Abingdon, and Floyd H. Roberts, of Bristol, as candidates for the House of Delegates. This is a very strong ticket, and harmonizes all sections in the county.

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The Virginia Mechanics' Institute will begin its fifty-fourth year October 1st.

During the session 1906-'07 the superintendent's annual report showed a total of 552 students enrolled, and a general per cent. of attendance throughout the session of 81. The report showed also that the increase in numbers over last year, both in enrollment in classes and attendance, was about 50 per cent.

The Schools.

The instruction given is divided into eight schools, presided over by twenty-four instructors. Each class meets between 7:30 and 9:30 P. M., according to a schedule which will be furnished on application to the superintendent. Usually a class meets twice a week.

The following branches are taught in a thorough and practical way: I. Mathematics; II. Science; III. Drawing and designing; IV. Language; V. Mechanical shops; VI. Arts; VII. Commercial; VIII. Engineering.

The last mentioned class, viz: engineering, is a course not hitherto offered at this school, and will meet on Saturday afternoons at 4 o'clock. It will embrace a study of the transit and level, with their adjustments; leveling and recording field notes, chaining, stadia measurements, triangulation, latitudes and departures, running lines and laying out curves, use of slide rule.

Books Worth Reading.

The library is equipped with reference books, periodicals and publications of miscellaneous kinds, which together make a most valuable collection of technical and general literature. This large and conveniently arranged room is opened every night of the year except during July.

In all there are some 8,000 volumes to which the students and the public generally have access. Besides the rich stores of technical publications are a number of works on general literary subjects, histories, novels, etc. Members and students may take certain publications for home reading by complying with the rules, which are posted on the door of the library. The public is invited to call in to make use of the reading-room.

The outlook for the coming session is brighter than ever in the long and varied history of the institution, and its management feels better able than ever to aid the young men of Richmond toward a practical education.

KIND OF HOLIDAY WEEK.

City Fathers Have Very Little to Do According to Schedule.

According to the schedule as now made out, the City Fathers have something before them that comes mighty near to being a week's holiday. All of the work laid out will be crowded into one day, Tuesday. At noon on that day the Committee on Clocks will hold a short session at the office of Vice-President Spence on Ninth Street. At 7:30 that evening the Committee on Markets will hold a session in the hall below.

It is understood that only routine business will be taken up and the meeting promises to be a short one. At 6 o'clock the Council will hold its monthly meeting. There is a considerable volume of business on the City clock and in the minds of the Councilmen and the probability is that the meeting will be a lengthy one.

Engagement Announced.

Mrs. Katherine Pohlig announces the engagement of her daughter, Rosa K. to Mr. Bernard Tolker, the wedding to take place Wednesday, September 12, at 10 o'clock A. M. in St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Schools.

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Every Morning . . . 9 a. m. to 1 p. m.

Sketch Classes, Monday (free to members) . . . 4 p. m. to 10 p. m.

Children's Class, Wednesday . . . 3 p. m. to 5 p. m.

Anatomy and Composition Wednesday (free to members) . . . 4 p. m. to 10 p. m.

Children's Class, Friday . . . 3 p. m. to 5 p. m.

Valentine Museum Class . . . 2 p. m. to 5 p. m.

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For announcement of the 70th session which will commence September 17, 1907, address

FRANK M. READE, M. D., Sec'y Richmond, Va.

Virginia Mechanics Institute,

Richmond's Night School of Technology will begin its fifty-fourth year Tuesday, October 1, 1907, at 7:30 P. M. Twenty-three instructors teach Mathematics, Science, Drawing and Designing, Free Hand, Mechanical and Architectural, English Language and Grammar, Shop Practice in Woodwork, Clay Modeling, Bookkeeping and Elementary Engineering.

Admission to the session will be given the exclusive privilege of entering before September 15th. After that date all applications will be considered in turn until the limit of each class is reached. For descriptive catalogue apply to Superintendent FRANK W. DUKE, Twelfth and Broad Streets, Chairman Committee on Schools.

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